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C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 000372

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/S, AF/E
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [SADC](#) [MA](#) [BC](#)
SUBJECT: SADC: "DRIVE-BY DEMARCHE" DELIVERED

REF: A. GABORONE 371
[1](#)B. STATE 45783

Classified By: Ambassador Stephen J. Nolan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: After a solid week of calls and letters to the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone requesting a meeting with the SADC Executive Secretary, Ambassador Nolan was fortunate to make a rare sighting of the elusive Dr. Tomaz Salomao May 13 at a meeting and luncheon for resident Chiefs of Mission hosted by the Nigerian High Commission. (Salomao only returned Monday May 11 from his latest travels.) Though Salomao arrived late and slipped out of the event before lunch was served, Ambassador Nolan managed to buttonhole Salomao and deliver the demarche. As the meeting concluded and the diplomats retired to an adjoining room for lunch, the Ambassador engaged Salomao as he was leaving, and with a copy of a non-paper in hand, he managed to deliver a "drive-by demarche" to him in the parking lot. He briefed Salomao regarding the USG's concerns about the need for internationally supervised elections in 2009 and discouraged unhelpful talk about use of the SADC Brigade in Madagascar (Ref B). End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) Dr. Salomao made no substantive response to the demarche and did not provide any new information regarding SADC's views on an election timeline for Madagascar. He did however indicate that SADC needs to be "pragmatic" in resolving the Madagascar situation. The Ambassador told Salomao that he would still like to have an office call with him soon to follow up on Madagascar and other pending business, and the Executive Secretary agreed in principle with this idea, but suggested no concrete time for such a meeting.

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador also spoke briefly with the Mozambican High Commissioner about Madagascar and SADC's actions to resolve the political crisis there. The High Commissioner said that it is important that SADC align its policy more closely with that of the African Union and do all it can to promote dialog in Madagascar. He also indicated that SADC has informally told Ravalomanana that use of the SADC Brigade is out of the question. He reiterated the sentiment of Botswana's Foreign Minister (Ref A) that Ravalomanana is "out of touch" and said that Mozambique supports new elections in Madagascar "the sooner, the better."

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Obtaining meetings at SADC, whether with technical experts and department heads or the Executive Secretary is often a frustrating and time-consuming process. SADC officials travel frequently, do not return

calls/letters/emails, and seem incapable of sharing information with or delegating actions to their subordinates.

For instance, Embassy officers (FO, POLE, and OSC) have been unable to pry any response or information out of SADC in response to the January 2009 Presidential Declaration on security cooperation with SADC. Though several hundred people work at the Secretariat headquarters less than a mile from our Embassy, it generally feels like no one is home at SADC. Various GOB officials have privately made the same complaint to us -- though Botswana is a member state and hosts the Secretariat, the GOB frequently feels ignored or stonewalled by Secretariat staff, which they regard as ineffectual anyway. Despite these hurdles, we will redouble our efforts to engage the Secretariat on this and other important issues. We would also recommend, however, that any urgent peace and security issues be brought to the attention of all regional SADC capitals, especially those of the Organ Troika, to assure that USG messages reach the real decision makers in timely fashion. End Comment.

NOLAN